



Former prime minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi receiving the Honorary Doctor of Agricultural Development from Universiti Putra Malaysia Chancellor Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah of Selangor.

UPM honours Abdullah's role in agriculture sector

KUALA LUMPUR: Former prime minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was yesterday awarded the Honorary Doctor of Agricultural Development by Universiti Putra Malaysia.

The citation for the award lauded Abdullah's contributions in breathing new life into the agricultural sector and uplifting its image in Malaysia.

It stated that Abdullah's initiative was aimed at increasing Malaysia's potential as a food producer, raise the income of rural folk and turn the sector into a new economic contributor.

UPM Chancellor Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah of Selangor said Abdullah's idea of making the agricultural sector the country's third engine of economic growth was a futuristic and visionary move.

"The endorsement of UPM as a centre of excellence in

agricultural learning during his tenure was proof of his commitment in enhancing the agriculture sector backed by knowledge and technology.

"I hope he will continue to contribute towards the development of society and the nation in the future," he said at UPM's 33rd convocation yesterday.

Sultan Sharafuddin said recent geo-political changes and the economic downturn demanded change in the traditional function of agriculture.

The sector's function of food production, job opportunities and income generation was now expanded to include an economic role and nature and environmental conservation.

This year, 7,597 students are graduating UPM comprising 5,984 with bachelor's degrees, 1,072 Master's, 141 doctorates and 400 diplomas.

Abdullah, in his acceptance speech, said his vision for the country's agriculture sector was to use technology to increase efficiency and production.

He said: "I was convinced of the importance and potential of agriculture and therefore during my tenure, the budget for the sector was doubled.

"State-of-the-art technology and new agricultural techniques were introduced especially the National Biotechnology Policy."

Abdullah said although these efforts had taken a long time to be implemented, he was happy it was well received.

"The productivity of the sector has now increased and many entrepreneurs have entered the agro-based industry.

He said the people had realised the potential of "Agriculture is Business".